AfterMath

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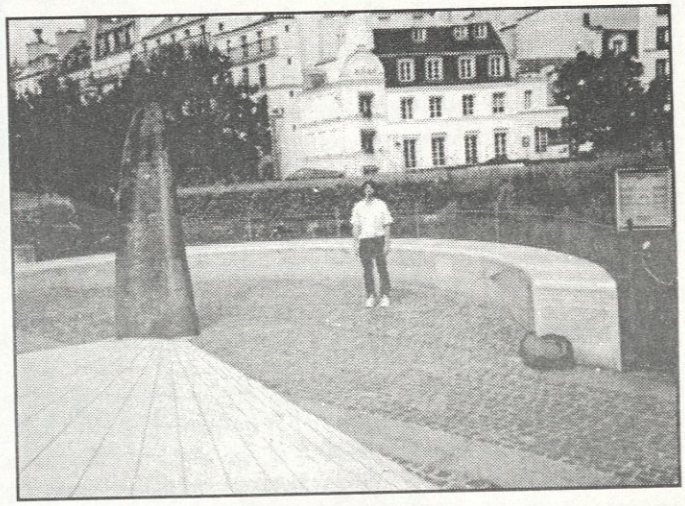
Rick Kreminski Travels to Bulgaria



"I gave an hour-long invited lecture at the 10th International Colloquium on Numerical Analysis and Computer Science with Applications from August 12 to 17 in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. Over 100 mathematicians, from over 20 countries, attended and gave talks.

It was a great feeling to be at such an international meeting, with speakers from all over: speakers came from Greece, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Brazil, China, Japan, Korea, Israel, Turkey, Romania, Denmark, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Spain, Italy, and more! From the US, speakers came from the Universities of Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, Hawaii, Arizona State, Georgia Tech, Clemson, and IBM (San Jose), to name a few places.

I was surprised at how many people I had 'almost' crossed paths with: one person knew someone that my kids knew, four speakers had been at one of the universities I used to be at, etc.

This was my first trip outside North America; and frankly, it was a blast. Bulgarian is related to Russian and uses the Cyrillic alphabet. This made even mundane tasks interesting—like buying a train ticket in a crowded rail center with no signs in English (and not even in our alphabet!), and where no one spoke English. The dollar went far in Bulgaria: a local beer, coke and veggie pizza dinner went for $4.84 Bulgarian dollars (levs), under $2.50US. Busses and taxis were very cheap.

The conference organized a few excursions for speakers, including trips to Roman ruins and a beautiful ski resort less than 20km from Greece. I do a lot of running, and now I can add Sophia and Plovdiv, Bulgaria and London to cities I have run in.

I managed to squeak in a day in London and a day in Paris on the way back. It was thrilling to see the Rosetta Stone, Big Ben and Parliament, Westminster Abbey, the Thames, and more in London; and the Louvre (with some da Vinci's and the Venus de Milo), the Eiffel Tower, the Champs d'Elysees, the Arc de Triomphe and more in Paris.

I am now advising everyone I meet to go to Europe if they have never gone, and if they can afford the time (and money). Since I went without my family I am hoping we can all go sometime in the next couple of years."

Mesquite Program

The Mathematics Department is now involved in a Masters Program in Secondary Education for Mathematics Teachers. This new program began in Fall 2000, with offerings in Mesquite at A&M-Commerce's Metroplex facility (2600 Motley Drive).

There is a large concentration of public school mathematics teachers in the Metroplex. Many school districts in that area require or encourage their teachers to obtain a masters degree. These factors create a strong need for such a program.

Courses offered so far have been History of Mathematics (Stuart Anderson), Higher Order Approximation Theory for Secondary Teachers (Rick Kreminski), Geometry (Eric Aurand). This semester, Dr. Kreminski is teaching Applications of Modern Mathematics for Teachers.

For more information about the program, see our web site:
http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/coas/math/masters/

Colloquium News

An active series of mathematics lectures continued over the past year through the efforts of Dr. Rick Kreminski. Following is a partial list of speakers, their institutions and topics.

Craig Jensen, Ohio State University, "Ends of Graphs"
Charles Coppin, University of Dallas, "A collage of Art and Mathematics"
Thomas Carr, Southern Methodist University, "Modulation Dynamics of Self-Pulsating Diode Laser"
Rick Kreminski, A&M-Commerce, "Some Mathematics in Computer Security"
Isabel Darcy, UT-Dallas, "Tangle Calculus and Modeling"
Barbara Shipman, UT-Arlington, "Flag Manifolds and the Toda Lattice"
Christopher Kribs Zaleta, UT-Arlington, "Mathematical Biology: Modeling Diseases"
Joe Iaia, UNT, "Radial Solutions of 'del' u+f(u)=0"

Alumni Updates

Janet Lashbrook (M.S. 1993) is teaching middle school mathematics at Fox Valley Christian Academy in Neenah, Wisconsin. She was a "stay-at-home mom for several years.

Jonathan Willauer (B.S. 1982) resigned his commission in the Air Force in 1990. Since then he has worked as a Computer Analyst/Programmer for the NASDAQ Stock Market in Trumbull, CT, and as a Senior Analyst/Programmer for the Wachovia Bank in Winston-Salem, NC. He has been elected as an officer in the bank. He offers tutoring (free!) to anyone from grade 3 to high school.

Joe Darin McIntier (B.S. 1997) is an Architect/Senior Developer for Fujitsu Transaction Systems, Inc. He designs and implements e-commerce web solutions. He has a son, Sean Michael, who was born in 1998.

Wendy Neal (B.S. 1996) is teaching mathematics, grades 7, 8, and 9 in Quitman, TX.

New Faculty

We are very pleased to welcome several new faculty to the department. Their presence will enlarge our ability to offer quality programs to students and to serve the academic community better.

Vanessa Huse will be teaching at our Navarro Campus in Corsicana. She has a varied background in mathematics, computer science and education with degrees from Sam Houston State University, the University of North Texas and East Texas State University. Dr. Huse has taught at Conroe ISD, UT-Tyler, LeTourneau University and Kilgore College. From 1982 to 1990 she was Chair of the Computer Science Department at Lon Morris College. She has an impressive record of Eisenhower grants, receiving at least one in each of the last twelve years. In these programs, she has coordinated teacher inservice for K-12 mathematics instructors. She has done extensive curriculum development, teacher training and teacher evaluations.

Nancy Livingston comes to A&M-Commerce from the University of Oregon where she received her Ph.D. in Analysis. Her area of research is C*-Algebras. Even though she is a recent graduate, she has presented results of her work at several universities. She has also submitted an article for publication to the International Journal of Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences. Dr. Livingston has a sixteen month old son, J. R. Her husband, John, was looking forward to living close to relatives in Plano—but they just moved to Missouri! Dr. Livingston says she is still suffering shock from the move and the Texas weather.

Karen Rhynard was most recently a public school principal. We were able to entice her away to help us meet the demand for teaching mathematics to K-8 teachers. She is certainly qualified in that area. Her degrees are from West Texas State University, Sam Houston State University and Texas A&M University. Much of her career has been in the public schools as a teacher, Assistant Principal and Principal. She also taught mathematics full-time at Sam Houston State University from 1979-1985. Dr. Rhynard has been very active in presenting papers at professional conferences and has nineteen articles published in various journals of pedagogy.

Second Annual Middle School Mathematics and Science Contest

On January 20, 2001, with the help of Ms. Janet Scott, the A&M-Commerce Mathematics Department hosted a TMSCA middle school mathematics and science contest. There were 271 kids in attendance representing 18 teams. Proceeds from the event went to the A&M-Commerce William C. McAfee Mathematics Education Endowment. The department plans for the contest to continue to grow even larger in 2002! Please contact us if you wish to be placed on the contest's mailing list.

New Middle School Mathematics and Mathematics/Science Teacher Preparation Programs

In conjunction with new Texas teaching certification levels, the A&M-Commerce Mathematics Department is very pleased to announce two new degree programs, which prepare preservice middle school teachers to teach mathematics and science in grades 4 through 8. Both degrees incorporate 27 credit hours of mathematics with the majority of the courses specifically designed for these two degrees. Mathematical Modeling of Science for Middle School Teachers I & II and History of Mathematics for Middle School Teachers are three new courses under development that will be taught for the first time in 2001 through 2002. We believe these will be particularly strong and unique programs in Texas and are excited about the possibilities they offer!

Update on the Math Skills Center

In the spring 2001 semester, Charles Jones returned to full-time teaching. We appreciate his more than ten years of service as the Director of the Skills Center.

The new Director of the Skills Center is Pamela Webster. We are pleased and excited to have her in this position. One of the first things she did was to provide a different look for the center in the form of fresh paint. The Math Skills Center led the way to all of our classrooms being repainted by student volunteers, and the improvement has been welcome and exhilarating. (Thank you to all the students who volunteered a Saturday to make this improvement on our department.)

Other things in the math lab have changed appearance also. New paintings hang on the walls and the computers have been rearranged to allow for what is, hopefully, easier access to all the assets of the computer lab, such as chalkboards and closet space. The computer lab has also added extra printers to ease the burden of printing that was being felt by the single DeskJet that was being used.

The Math Skills Center has also recently implemented a brand new computerized login system that records the date and time in and out of students. The program will also accumulate a student's hours simply through the entry of their social security number. This system has made signing into the lab much easier on the tutors and should simplify the retrieval of lab hours by instructors. Everyone in the Math Skills Center seems to be extremely pleased with the new addition and we are all looking forward to further changes in the lab. The next possible change: curtains.

Let Us Hear From You!

We'd like to hear from all of our former students. Whether you used slide rules or calculators in the classroom, attended ET or A&M-Commerce, we're interested in what's happened in your life since you left campus. If you have a story about a favorite profes-, we'd like to hear that too. Please fill out the form below and return it to the Math Department so your information can be included in the next AfterMath newsletter.

Name: _____

Address (for our files): _____

City, State & Zip: _____

Degree: _____ Year Graduated: _____

Please list any promotions, career changes, achievements, awards, or personal news that you'd like to share.

_____

_____

_____

Homecoming Breakfast

The fifteenth annual Mathematics Homecoming Student/Alumni Breakfast will be held at 9:00 a.m., Saturday, October 27, 2001 in the Bluebonnet room of the Sam Rayburn Memorial Student Center.

Please send in your reservations by October 23, 2001. The cost is $6.50 per person.

Name: _____

Address (for our files): _____

City, State & Zip: _____

Please reserve ___ places at the Homecoming Breakfast on October 27, 2001 @ $6.50 each.

Please return to:
Mathematics Department, Texas A&M University-Commerce, P.O. Box 3011, Commerce, TX 75429-3011

Endowments and Scholarship Winners

We are grateful to the many alumni and former faculty who have improved our department by the support of scholarship endowments. Over the past year we have been able to distribute funds from these endowments to deserving students.

Recipients of the various awards in 2001 were as follows:

Rachel Lafferty Scholarship
Christi Hooper, Pittsburg, TX

John and Elaine Yznaga Scholarship
Jamie Jinks, Omaha, TX

Dale and Betty Bedgood Scholarship
Aaron Edwards, Paris, TX

Northeast Texas Transfer Scholarship
Lisa Ellerman, Mount Pleasant, TX

Bub Taylor Scholarship
Amber Benson, Irving, TX

Cecil B. Wright Scholarship
Casey Huff, Houston and John Denny, Pittsburg, TX

Dennis Grantham Graduate Scholarship
Joseph Moore, Pledger, TX

You can make contributions to any of these by contacting the Mathematics Department 903-886-5157, or the A&M-Commerce Development Office 903-886-5712.

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